

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for prepaying roaming minutes, comprising:
crediting a user's account with prepaid roaming minutes purchased by a user, the prepaid roaming minutes comprising units of time for telephone usage outside of a home calling area defined by a user's calling plan, wherein the user's calling plan includes a roaming charge for the prepaid roaming minutes and wherein the home calling area comprises one of a plurality of predefined geographical areas each of which is within a larger predefined geographical area comprising a national calling area;
receiving one of a plurality of access codes before dialing a roaming call, each of the plurality of access codes corresponding to a certain number of the prepaid roaming minutes;
notifying the user of the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account via a display on a wireless telephone associated with the user;
determining ~~[[if]]~~ whether the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased at a time greater than a predefined time before a call is made, wherein the prepaid roaming minutes are purchased at a discounted rate, wherein the discounted rate is lower than the roaming charge included in the user's calling plan, and wherein the prepaid roaming minutes are subtracted from the user's account at the discounted rate when the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased at a time greater than the predefined time and when the call is made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan; and
~~if the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased at a time greater than the predefined time, subtracting roaming minutes from the user's account when the call is made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan; and~~
determining whether the length of the roaming call is greater than the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account, wherein the difference between the length of the roaming call and the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account is charged as undiscounted roaming when the length of the roaming call is greater than the number of prepaid minutes in the user's account.

if the prepaid roaming minutes were not purchased at a time greater than the predefined time, subtracting the roaming minutes from the user's account at a non-discounted rate when the call is made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
crediting prepaid roaming minutes at a discounted rate.
3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
crediting prepaid roaming minutes at a discounted rate proportional to the time
purchased.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
crediting a user's account with prepaid roaming minutes periodically.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a purchase order for roaming minutes from a user.
6. (Canceled)
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
deleting the roaming minutes after a predefined time.
8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the predefined time is about six
months.
9. (Canceled)
10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 [[9]], wherein the predefined time is
about one month.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein crediting further comprises:
crediting a user's account with a block of prepaid roaming minutes.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the block of prepaid roaming minutes is in increments of at least about 10 minutes.

13-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A system for prepaying roaming minutes, comprising:
a computer; and

a software program loaded onto the computer configured to:

credit a user's account with prepaid roaming minutes purchased by a user, the prepaid roaming minutes comprising units of time for telephone usage outside of a home calling area defined by a user's calling plan, wherein the user's calling plan includes a roaming charge for the prepaid roaming minutes and wherein the home calling area comprises one of a plurality of predefined geographical areas each of which is within a larger predefined geographical area comprising a national calling area;

receive one of a plurality of access codes before dialing a roaming call, each of the plurality of access codes corresponding to a certain number of the prepaid roaming minutes;

notify the user of the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account via a display on a wireless telephone associated with the user;

determine ~~[[if]] whether~~ the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased a predefined time before a call is made, wherein the prepaid roaming minutes are purchased at a discounted rate, wherein the discounted rate is lower than the roaming charge included in the user's calling plan, and wherein the prepaid roaming minutes are subtracted from the user's account at the discounted rate when the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased at a time greater than the predefined time and when the call is made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan; and

if the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased at a time greater

than the predefined time, subtract roaming minutes from the user's account when the call is made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan; and

determine whether the length of the roaming call is greater than the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account, wherein the difference between the length of the roaming call and the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account is charged as undiscounted roaming when the length of the roaming call is greater than the number of prepaid minutes in the user's account.

~~if the prepaid roaming minutes were not purchased at a time greater than the predefined time, subtract the roaming minutes from the user's account at a non-discounted rate when calls are made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan.~~

16. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the software program is further configured to credit a user's account with prepaid roaming minutes at a discounted rate.

17. (Original) The system of claim 15, further comprising:
a computer network in communication with the computer and configured for allowing the user to access the account.

18. (Original) The system of claim 15, wherein the software is further configured to protect the user account with a password.

19. (Original) The system of claim 17, wherein the computer network is configured to allow a user to access the user's account using voice mail.

20. (Currently Amended) A system for prepaying roaming minutes, comprising:
a telephone; and
a software program loaded onto the telephone configured to:
credit a user's account with prepaid roaming minutes at a discounted rate, the prepaid roaming minutes comprising units of time for telephone usage outside of a home calling area defined by a user's calling plan, wherein the user's calling plan includes a roaming charge for the prepaid roaming minutes and wherein the home calling area

comprises one of a plurality of predefined geographical areas each of which is within a larger predefined geographical area comprising a national calling area, wherein the discounted rate is lower than the roaming charge included in the user's calling plan;

receive one of a plurality of access codes before dialing a roaming call, each of the plurality of access codes corresponding to a certain number of the prepaid roaming minutes;

notify the user of the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account via a display on a wireless telephone associated with the user;

determine [[if]] whether the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased a predefined time before a call is made, wherein the prepaid roaming minutes are purchased at a discounted rate, wherein the discounted rate is lower than the roaming charge included in the user's calling plan, and wherein the prepaid roaming minutes are subtracted from the user's account at the discounted rate when the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased at a time greater than the predefined time and when the call is made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan; and

~~if the prepaid roaming minutes were purchased at a time greater than the predefined time, subtract roaming minutes from the user's account when the call is made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan; and~~

determine whether the length of the roaming call is greater than the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account, wherein the difference between the length of the roaming call and the number of prepaid roaming minutes in the user's account is charged as undiscounted roaming when the length of the roaming call is greater than the number of prepaid minutes in the user's account.

~~if the prepaid roaming minutes were not purchased at a time greater than the predefined time, subtract roaming minutes from the user's account at a non-discounted rate when calls are made outside the home calling area defined by the user's calling plan.~~

21. (Canceled)

22. (Original) The system of claim 20, further comprising:
a computer network in communication with the telephone and configured for allowing the user to access the account.
23. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the software is further configured to protect the account with a password.
24. (Original) The system of claim 22, wherein the computer network is configured to allow a user to access the user's account using voice mail.
25. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the telephone is a wireless telephone.
26. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the telephone is a digital telephone.